Phantasy and Fiction

FLOYD DELL

ALL fiction is not contained within the covers of books. An incident which concerned myself and my eldest boy helped me to understand the function of fiction for children and for everybody else. At least it gave me some of the ideas that I have about its place in our lives.

The boy (at that time our only child) was then about three and one-half years old. One summer at Sciasconset he was deprived of his usual playmates of his own age, and made large demands upon both his parents for company and companionship.

We were then in the young parental stage when you think you have to do everything the doctors tell you for the health of your children. One of those things was the afternoon nap. He rebelled against it with such complete and devastating success, that he finally escaped. But in the course of one of those afternoon naps, he had succeeded in getting to sleep after having wrecked the room. Falling into an exhausted slumber, he was unable to wake up; when he did, he was still in a sort of dream. He wasn't seeing the world about him, he was still seeing some dream. It took nearly an hour for him to come to in the world of reality.

I became curious to find out what those nightmares were about that hung over him and haunted him so long afterwards. There was no use asking him about dreams because he didn't know what they were. As long as he was seeing the dream, it was real. When he had finally wakened, it was gone. I listened very carefully to any casual remarks he might make within some time afterward.

One day he said, "Papa, when we go home will you buy me a new woodchuck?"

Although that meant nothing to me, I said, "Yes."

Another day he said, "When you buy me a new woodchuck, you won't let Mike burn it up, will you?" And I answered, "No."

Then I remembered something that gave a clue. Just the day we left home, a man who worked around the place had been making bonfires of trash. Also, he had caught in a trap a woodchuck which had been eating up our vegetable garden. I don't know what Mike actually did with the woodchuck, but apparently the little boy had the idea he had burned him up in the bonfire.

At first I thought it would be a sufficient reassurance to say, "I don't think that Mike really burned up the woodchuck. I think he put him down some place and when he went to look for him, he was gone. I think the woodchuck went back to his little house in the woods."

That seemed to satisfy him for the time. But I thought some more about it. "This is a painful thing and perhaps I can change this nightmare (which might be called a dream story with a bad ending) by giving it a still happier ending."

Again a few days later, I couldn't wake him from one of these devastating nightmares—he was awake but still he was not awake. He looked at me with a kind of horror and fear and incredulity. I was involved in the dream, apparently, in some way. He looked at me as though he couldn't believe these dreams were true.

I tried to distract his attention. I knew he was fond of playing in the swing on the porch, but at sight of it, he burst into tears. I put him up on my shoulders (a position of eminence he was fond of) trying to reassure his egoism, but he was just the most unhappy and miserable little boy in the world.

Suddenly I realized that the dream was about himself and me, that *he* was the woodchuck and that *I* was Mike. My happy ending for the story hadn't been satisfactory because it still left the terrible Mike looking for the little woodchuck, and if he found the little woodchuck undoubtedly he would

burn him up. Here were Mike and the woodchuck left unreconciled, so that he and I were unreconciled. The only way I could think of reconciling myself with him was by reconciling Mike and the woodchuck.

I said, "You know, Mike got to thinking about that woodchuck and the more he thought about that woodchuck, the more he liked him. Mike thought, 'I would like to have him for a pet, take him home and give him a nice room to sleep in, a saucer of milk to drink, and keep him for my little woodchuck.' He went into the woods but he couldn't find him. He called and said, 'Hello, woodchuck!' He was lying in his house in the woods; he looked out and heard Mike but he didn't say *nothin.* Mike called again, 'Hello there! little woodchuck!' but the woodchuck lay there and didn't say *nothin.* Mike called again, 'Hello! little old woodchuck!' "

I wanted to see if this was having any effect, so I marched around until I got in front of a mirror. On the way I said, "So this time the woodchuck said, 'Hello, Mike!' and Mike said, 'You know little woodchuck, I would like to take you home and have you for my pet.' "

By this time I reached the mirror and looked in. His unhappy face was transformed; it was beaming, radiant, the world was all right again!

I said, "Shall we have the woodchuck say yes?"

He said, *"Yes."*

So I concluded, "The woodchuck said, 'All right, Mike!' and ran and jumped into Mike's arms and Mike took him home."

He gave another real sigh, as though he were released from some terrible burden, and said, "Now I have an airship!" That meant the porch swing, so we went and played in it.

The Happy Ending

To me, there are two points about this—In the first place, Tony never had another fear dream of that sort or of any sort. The other thing is this, and to me very interesting—When we got home, Mike came around to clean up the place and I saw Tony and Mike talking together.

That evening at dinner I said, "I saw you were talking with Mike."

He said, "Yes."

I asked, "Did Mike say anything about the little woodchuck?"

He gave me a funny look out of the corner of his eye and said, *"You're Mike."*

That was rather staggering, since it indicated a consciousness of the actual symbolic values of his phantasy. But what he was trying to assure me of was that the Mike and the woodchuck in his dream were different from the Mike in reality. He knew the difference just as he knows he likes the story of Santa Claus but is not fooled about it in reality. He enjoys two separate worlds.

I thought a great deal about this incident in connection with fiction and art in general. My interpretation would be, that phantasy is an imperfect effort to give ourselves certain emotional satisfactions. It is an imperfect effort, I think, because the emotional satisfactions which demand relief, to begin with, in childhood, are definitely connected with the child's parents. They are ambivalent; they involve emotions of love and of hostility about the same person. The effort to dramatize those things wholly by means of pure phantasy is often exhausting. What is more, in so far as the phantasy itself is concerned, the attempt to get these emotions satisfied is still unsuccessful, even after the real persons concerned, the parents, have been turned into animals. (This is apparently the first thing the child does—he turns beings into animals and tells himself the story in those terms.)

Drawing the Sting of Reality

And with us all, here is where fiction comes to play its part. Even after this phase of childhood has passed, the world of phantasy remains colored by these feelings of guilt. Apparently, therefore, there is a deep satisfaction and sense of release in any story in which the conscious mind has taken part, in which the phantasy situation has been refined, dramatized still further, adjusted to the real world, harmonized to some extent with actual reality and harmonized with our conceptions of justice and kindness. A story or a novel then, is a phantasy which has been harmonized to some extent both with the outward reality and with social conceptions of order and justice and decent behavior. The pure phantasy itself is unsatisfactory because it conforms to these insufficiently. As in Tony's reaction to his dream, the child, or adult, doesn't get satisfaction out of the pure phantasy because it is an unsuccessful attempt to work things out and is still colored, apparently, by some feelings of guilt. But when it is consciously fictionized by someone else, as in my conclusion to his dream, these are at last released and resolved.

And this is why a story upon almost any subject is interesting to the child, or to the adult for that matter, because the same mechanisms are involved to the extent to which it takes up, unfolds and dramatizes some phantasy and so brings it into

harmony with reality and with our accepted standards of behavior. No story, however apparently close to phantasy, but is an improvement over phantasy itself. Often, indeed, it is a very good thing for the reader if fiction isn't so well harmonized with adult ideals that it becomes too remote from the phantasy for which, through the story, he desires to get satisfaction.

Each for Himself

It does not matter that the reader's phantasy differs greatly from the writer's. That is inevitable. A person who writes a story has something in his own mind, but exactly what he has in his own mind he cannot possibly convey by any words to any other human being. Take the matter of description: I write about a red headed girl. I have a particular one in mind, one I know or one I have invented. There are no words which will put my mind-picture into the mind of any reader. All that words can do is evoke the reader's own memories. It makes you think of the red headed girl you know. If I describe features, you take them apart and put them together and make new ones. I cannot tell and no writer can tell of any experience he has had or imagined. He can merely remind other people of the experience they have had.

Though the experiences of which people are reminded are always nothing more or less than their own experiences, these may still be of two sorts: They may be either full and complete experiences or partial experiences. That is to say, a person may have the full and complete experience of committing a murder. But one who has been angry and has *wanted* to kill somebody has to that partial extent also had the experience of murder, and to that extent is able to understand the story of murder and crime. All the way through life we are continually identifying ourselves with other people and understanding their lives and sympathizing with them. How do we do that? Only to the extent that we ourselves have had fully or partially those same experiences. In so far as we have had those experiences only partially, we are unable to understand this person's whole experience. But we incorporate what we can into our knowledge and this concept then becomes a part of our own memories.

So that, when a person writes a story, he plays as though upon a musical instrument, upon the memories of his readers. Many of these memories are quite at the level of consciousness and others are deeply repressed. If they are repressed, they are in some way painful. If reading brings them up and they are still painful, the reader doesn't like the story. But if it brings up the painful memories and somehow reconciles them with whatever they need to be reconciled with, there is a relief and the reader thinks it is a good story. The reason why the tragic is supposed to be the best art is because it has succeeded in making us face the terrible things about life—death, the loss of loved ones, the failure of our aspirations, the cruelty of the world—all of those painful and unpleasant things. We are enabled to face those unpleasant things because they are put in connection with other things which are sufficiently beautiful so that they don't seem nearly so painful. And therein lies a great relief.

Out of all this, it seems to me that fiction has value in the world because it is a more highly organized way of dealing with phantasy material than the ordinary individual is capable of. The ordinary individual can't manage his own experiences; he has to repress a great many of them, beginning in childhood when he isn't able to deal with the conflicting emotions he has about his parents, and the painful situation of a child in a family where there is a great deal of hurt, jealousy and so on. He is unable to manage all of those things consciously and he represses a great deal of them. And so on throughout life. He isn't able to manage the view of his experiences through his own consciousness. But when he reads a story, somebody else is managing it for him, somebody else is taking out a little bit of *this* experience and a little bit of *that* experience and putting it together in some way more satisfying than anything he has achieved.

All Things to All Men

Almost any fiction, as well as almost any art, is likely to be immensely salutary in a psychological way to certain individuals. If one is thinking of fiction for children, the only possible rule of choice for them—as for adults—is what the individual child is interested in. I know that people try to suggest what is good for children at certain ages. I don't see any particular harm in doing this, but I think usually children's and grown people's interests are much wider than either we or they themselves are aware of.

This was illustrated rather startlingly when this same little boy was about five. A little girl of about ten or eleven was living with us that summer. In doing their bedtime reading, I was trying to make one story do for both the five-year-old and the little girl's more adult tastes. Something in connection with Aesop reminded me of Bernard Shaw's *An-*

drocles and the Lion. I read it and they were immediately interested. No doubt the little boy's appreciation was conditioned by the fact that he was trying to be in the little girl's grown-up class. Nevertheless, his emotional enthusiasm was quite genuine. Both of the children were so enthusiastic about *Androcles and the Lion,* that they wanted to know who wrote it. When I told them Bernard Shaw, they said, "Read some more of his." I thought, "Well, let them get tired of it." They followed him, being bored in parts, through play after play—*Cashel Byron's Profession, Cæsar and Cleopatra* and three or four others. I was astonished to find out how much first rate melodrama there is in Bernard Shaw, how full his plays are of heroes and villains, what an exciting yarn there is in each one. I found that although there is a great deal of the intellectual content of the play that the child is not competent of understanding, the emotional content is down to a five-year-old level. A child of five years is capable of understanding a hero; he knows a coward, a scoundrel, a good person, a bad person, a kind person, a wicked person—and loves it. At the same time that this boy was so highly interested in Bernard Shaw's plays, he got some kind of satisfaction out of the *Uncle Wiggly* stories.

I remember when I was a child of eleven I read *Les Miserables* and found it a tremendously exciting detective story. I read every word of the book again a few years later and found a love story that I had never seen before. Again still later I found something else in it. There was a new story there every time. I read it to tatters. It doesn't seem a great book to me now but it was several types of a great book to me in its time.

When it comes to the particular adults who happen to be parents and their fiction reading, I think they are children too. We are all children when we read fiction. We undoubtedly get some incidental instruction from fiction, but its real value to us is emotional rather than intellectual. From its very nature, I do not believe instruction can be the main or important function of fiction. I am inclined to think that as parents we must get our instruction from books which we read with our conscious minds, for instruction, not out of works of fiction.

It seems to me the function of fiction is release through the operation of a conscious mind in control of phantasies and so able to harmonize them with our ethical standards and our conceptions of reality. There are all sorts of ways of making this reconciliation. Writers may even give us the satisfactions of doing the bad things we want to do and then of being punished for them. But some sort of reconciliation is an important part of the reader's experience of release. Though his own phantasy leaves him with a feeling of guilt, in the book he is permitted to enjoy it.

We should not ask more from what are, after all, infantile phantasies even at their best in creative masterpieces of fiction—infantile phantasies harmonized at last with the world of reality.

Reciprocity in Reading

A survey shows what those who write and those who read books for parents think they should contain.

RALPH H. OJEMANN and GEORGE D. STODDARD

THIS is an age of science, of technology and highly developed craft. Parents are right in becoming increasingly critical of literature which attempts to aid them in rearing children. They should expect a fair treatment at the hands of authors, but should also be prepared to help. Reading a book should not be just a passive affair in which the author reports and the reader accepts. Leaders, clinicians and research workers have produced a tremendous amount of reading material for parents. In this paper we present briefly some of the results and implications of an extensive analysis which discloses what aspects of child development these writers have considered of importance to parents, and suggests principles of selection to the reader.

A broad survey was made by developing an extended outline of the entire field of child development and classifying materials accordingly. The

outline consisted of forty-three divisions grouped under the three major headings: biological, psychological and social aspects of development.

What an analysis along these lines of twenty-five popular books in parent education revealed is shown in the accompanying chart. On the left-hand side are listed the name and number of the forty-three topics. In the right-hand column appears the total of authors discussing each topic. No author included all the topics, but, as the chart shows, some were much more frequently dealt with than others.

Popularity of Topics Among Authors

Divisions (By Number and Topic)	Number of Authors Discussing
(1) Reproduction	11
(2) Genetics and heredity	10
(3) Growth (except bone and skeleton)	9
(4) Bone and skeleton	6
(5) Metabolism	4
(6) Respiration	2
(7) Nutrition and digestion	15
(8) Blood and circulation	3
(9) Elimination	11
(10) Sense organs	15
(11) Nervous system	9
(12) Muscular system	13
(13) Sleep	7
(14) Disease	14
(15) Composite (includes endocrinology)	6
(16) General principles of biological development	3
(17) Physiology of speech	3
(18) General health	16
(19) Motor development	12
(20) Intellectual development	19
(21) Language development	10
(22) Emotional development	19
(23) Personality development	22
(24) Development of æsthetic ability	6
(25) Development in reading, writing and nature study	2
(26) Mental disorders	11
(27) Habit	16
(28) Learning	7
(29) General principles of psychological development	9
(30) Instincts, impulses and reflexes	16
(31) Descriptions of social behavior patterns	24
(32) Social developments through family relationships	25
(33) Social development through play group relationships	17
(34) Social development through school relationships	20
(35) Social development through economic group relationships	12
(36) Social development through church relationships	4
(37) Social development through general culture	14
(38) Social development through other group relationships	17
(39) Social development and non-specified environmental relationships	22
(40) Non-social conditionings of social behavior	10
(41) General principles of social development	5
(42) Theories or principles of general development	6
(43) General methodology	5

Personality development, descriptions of social behavior patterns, development of social behavior through family relationships, and development of social behavior through non-specified environmental relationships were discussed by almost every author. Next in order we find the child's intellectual development, his emotional development, the influence upon social behavior of play group relationships, school relationships and other group relationships. On the other hand such physiological topics as metabolism, respiration, blood and circulation, and physiology of speech are discussed by only a few authors.

Under psychological development it is interesting to note that only about half included material relating to motor development and language development, while only six chose to include the development of the child's æsthetic ability. Under social development the influence of church relationships is discussed by only four of the writers. The influence of economic group relationships and of social customs and traditions was included by approximately half, while family, play group and school relationships received attention, as we have already seen, from a very large proportion of the writers.

Do authors differ merely in the topics they elect to discuss or do they also differ in the material which they consider adequate for a given topic?

These questions are answered by the results of a detailed analysis of the material presented by ten authors on the topic *guiding preschool children in eating activities.* The material from each writer was classified into units such as regularity of mealtime; indices of nutritional status; time of introducing new foods; methods of introducing new foods; self-feeding; textures, consistencies and flavors of foods; urging the child to eat; attendants at meals; and use of praise or other types of rewards. A total of fifty-nine such units was required to classify the material from these ten authors, although the largest number of units used by any one author was thirty-seven, while one writer covered only fourteen. The principles discussed by eight or more of the writers relate to regularity of mealtime, effect of emotion on the digestive system, sensory and motor capacities of the newborn infant as related to feeding, time of introducing new foods and new feeding implements, attendants at meals, general characteristics of the table and dishes and other equipment, effect of unpleasant associations with food, and general procedure to discover causes of food refusals. Differences among authors are shown by the fact that twenty-three of the units were discussed by six or more of the authors, while thirty-six were discussed by five authors or less. Only

three authors considered the child's reaction to varying textures, consistencies and flavors of foods.

These results are typical of those secured from similar analyses of sleep, play, use of money, discipline, and social and personality development. Variations are even more pronounced for materials relating to discipline and to social and personality development. A total of 150 units was required to classify the materials dealing with social and personality development from ten authors, but each author contributed to only a fraction of the total. These results indicate the need of studies to determine what material is really necessary for parents.

Accuracy and Its Pitfalls

We may extend our analysis another step and compare the writers with respect to the material within a given unit. This reveals four important facts. The first is that there is a tendency to neglect the results of careful research work. For example, in the discussions of the use of height-weight tables in assessing the nutritional status of the child, the most frequent statement made is that the figures in the tables represent averages and that an allowance of from 7 to 10 per cent above or below the average is permissible. Studies available since 1924 show that a much better prediction of weight can be made by using measures of size in addition to height. Moreover the studies also show that the use of the 7 to 10 per cent deviation misses as many as 50 per cent of those judged by more thorough examinations to be in need of nutritional care. Clearly the 7 to 10 per cent principle is seriously misleading. Another illustration of a flagrant disregard for careful research work lies in the field of children's reading. About five or six years ago there appeared in book form a study of children's reading which presented a list to be used in selecting books for children. The authors stated that this work was based upon a study of children's interests. Careful workers in the field of reading have pointed out that the data upon which the selection was based have not been published and have accepted the list with reservations. But references in books for parents omit to state these reservations.

A second fact is that frequently the generality or vagueness of the principles makes their application to specific cases extremely difficult. For example, in a study of children's use of money we tried to use the principles developed in the literature to appraise situations found in a series of individual cases. Although each case was available for detailed study, considerable difficulty was experienced, because the general principles set forth in child study books lacked meaning unless supplemented from sources not ordinarily available to parents. This experience has an important educational implication. While the essential guides to conduct are general principles, the *teaching* of a general principle requires adequate specific material.

A third difficulty arises from the liberal use of indefinite terms. In analyzing the materials relating to play, for example, numerous recommendations were found with an age range qualification. An attempt to combine these in sequence proved exceedingly difficult, mainly because of variability in such terms as "child," "young child," "baby," "infant," "in childhood," "in early childhood."

A fourth tendency noted is that in dealing with controversial elements, a writer may ignore the controversy and present only his own point of view. This is misleading except to experts familiar with the field, and when employed, the individual character of the work should be made clear to the reader. It is much more satisfactory for the writer to consider some of the arguments on the other side before presenting his own conclusions.

In view of the great complexity of materials in the field of parent education and of the diversity of judgment and opinion, it is clear that the term "the expert" has little meaning in fact. An intelligent parent, going over the immense amount of available material, would be considerably at a loss as to the validity of the writing on any particular problem in child development or child behavior. Parents need to know not only what the literature consists of, but how to evaluate statements, how to avoid pitfalls.

The Reader Takes a Hand

Certain helps are known to be of value for parents and parent educators.

As a rule no one author or reference will be completely adequate or infallible.—Each book is written from a certain point of view which may or may not be most helpful to a particular parent. If the point of view is too scientific or technical the result may be a compendium of knowledge unintelligible to the parent. On the other hand, some writings attain their popularity at the expense of true worth. We know that a rousing, radical statement appeals to the general reader. While it would be interesting to have complete, definite and concrete statements on many aspects of child life, it is safer at the present time to resist the temptation to dogmatize.

This suggests that various sources or authors be compared with respect to their statements on the

same problem. For example, if Smith says that a certain amount of whipping is good for children, and Jones is utterly opposed, perhaps we have at least a situation which calls for open-mindedness. All cases of downright contradiction should be checked carefully against research materials, if they are available. Where research is not available the experiences of parents or nursery school teachers may be brought to bear upon the question. Sometimes a little checking up in the group is feasible even though such work would not meet the more rigid criteria of scientific method.

The reviews of books are often helpful.—A few reviewers, usually not too well trained themselves, invariably give a new work strong approval. They are the glad-handers of the semitechnical world and sometimes they are useful as shock absorbers. Beyond these, however, is a group of more serious students who seek to find the real contribution in any new work. They are (*Continued on page* 212)

"Advice to Parents"

MARY DAY WINN

A MAN who was for a long time the successful editor of an adventure-fiction magazine once told me that in his early days he wrote a "mothers'" column for a Texas paper. I think it was called "Aunt Sally Says—"; at any rate, it was advice to parents on how to raise their children. Though this man was a good editor of detective stories, he certainly was not—at the age of twenty-five or even later—a competent adviser to parents; yet that type of column, written by that type of unskilled person, was once fairly common. In the past fifteen years or so, however, there has taken place a tremendous revolution and improvement in the type of material on parent education offered by magazines and newspapers.

Ignorance and failure to appreciate the importance of "advice to parents" were not the only difficulties encountered in establishing it on a really sound basis. Another factor that prevented the giving of very helpful or reliable information to the general public was the attitude of the medical profession. Physicians formerly believed—some still do—that any writing by a doctor for lay publications was improper because it was a form of self-advertisement. They also believed—at one time justifiably—that writing for these publications was too uncertain to risk their reputations on it. In the days of "yellow journalism" doctors never knew what to expect; what they wrote might be edited, cut, added to, or have some ridiculous headline put over it. The American Medical Association, therefore, frowned on writing by physicians for lay publications. As a result most of the medical reading matter to reach people twenty-five years ago came through patent medicine advertisements and testimonials. Readers had almost no chance, except in technical or medical journals, of getting honest medical or hygienic information. Even the medical news printed in some of the very highest class newspapers might be incorrect since there was no medical expert on the staff to appraise its reliability.

An editor who has played a leading part in changing the attitude of the medical profession toward giving information in lay publications, and in making such publications worthy of their confidence is Mrs. William Brown Meloney. She first became interested because of her own experiences.

Being anxious to bring up her baby in the most up-to-date and intelligent fashion she subscribed to a woman's magazine and read it assiduously. One of the first articles she read was entitled "What to Do When You Want to Write Home and the Baby Is Fretful." It pointed out that very often when a mother wanted to write a letter home or attend to some other chore, the baby persisted in whining and crying. But, the article continued, there were ways of keeping him busy and therefore quiet. One way was to put a little mucilage on the tips of his fingers and a feather on the mucilage. The infant would be so thoroughly occupied trying to pick the feather from his fingers, first with one hand and then with the other, that mamma would have plenty of time to write her letters.

But, Mrs. Meloney asked herself, when the baby put his finger with the mucilage on it in his mouth, what then? She had had no experience with babies,

but she had enough plain common sense to know that this mucilage-feather suggestion was idiotic, even dangerous. Then and there she decided that she would like some day to become the editor of a woman's magazine which would give really reliable information to parents on child problems.

An Eminent Pioneer

When she became editor of *Delineator* she carried out this determination. Looking around for the best known authority on child health, she found Dr. L. Emmett Holt, the author of *The Care and Feeding of Children,* and persuaded him to write for her. Up to the day he left New York for the trip on which he died, Dr. Holt conducted the "Happy Baby Department" in the *Delineator,* and associated with him in running it were several of the country's leading child specialists. Not only did he introduce that class of scientific advice into a lay publication, but he was allowed to throw out of the magazine thousands of dollars worth of advertising which he considered harmful to children. The standard thus set by the *Delineator* had great influence in raising the standards of other magazines in regard to medical information. It also convinced a great many doctors that it was possible for a physician to write for a lay publication without injuring his dignity or having statements put under his name with which he could not agree.

In addition to medical information about child care, many other types of information and a great deal of personal service are now given by magazines and newspapers. How really constructive this cooperation between a publication and a professional group can be is illustrated by a recent series of articles on psychiatry published in the *Herald Tribune Magazine.* One of the many subjects upon which competent psychiatrists have been enormously helpful is the all-important matter of business success and failure. A great many people fail in one way or another because of difficulties in adjustment which can be set right by proper psychiatric advice. Feeling that here there was a real opportunity for public service through a periodical, Mrs. Meloney appealed to Dr. William A. White, Head of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington. He responded by calling together, under the sponsorship of the American Psychiatric Association, a conference of leading psychiatrists to discuss the psychological reasons for failure. The group included, besides Dr. White, Dr. Douglas A. Thom, Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe, Dr. Abraham Meyerson, Dr. George K. Pratt, Dr. Arthur H. Ruggles, Dr. Morris Fishbein and others. Out of this conference grew a series of articles for the lay reader on the psychological reasons for failure. The series was widely helpful both in the periodical and later in book form.

Because of the dynamic quality of psychiatry and its significance in the adjustment of human relations, a good many spectacular and even unwarranted applications of what are really sound principles are coming before the public. It is more or less inevitable in a science which deals with human relations that our enthusiasm for it should outstrip our preparedness to practice it. But this possibility is something every parent must keep in the back of his mind in interpreting articles which purport to give psychiatric advice on how to raise children. The parent must be sure that the articles come from a reliable source, from someone who through study and broad experience is competent to give responsible advice.

Many magazines, particularly the large women's magazines, have established departments of recognized standing which furnish certain kinds of advice to parents. Such scientific leaders as Dr. E. V. McCollum, Dr. Harvey Wiley, Dr. Mary Swartz Rose, Dr. Josephine Hemenway Kenyon, are following Dr. Holt's pioneer work in presenting accurate current information on physical care.

Widening Horizons

More recently there has been a marked interest in psychological training. At least one monthly now has a regular department of child training, and others publish occasional articles by authoritative writers. Reliable articles on child care, both physical and mental, also appear in some of the Sunday magazines published by the larger newspapers. The daily newspapers too are doing their part. "Hints to mothers," of all sorts and varied degrees of soundness, may be found on almost every woman's page throughout the country.

But although this is the most direct type of parent education offered to parents in general periodicals, it is not all. Many monthlies and weeklies devoted to literature and discussions of current interests have "discovered" parent education. And articles on many of the less technical, more personal, phases of child rearing are frequent and valuable contributions to their columns. Such articles are likely to be merely amusing or more or less controversial, raising many points which are open to further discussion among parents themselves.

A peculiarly interesting phase of periodical development, from the editorial point of view, is the un-

precedented growth during the last five years of magazines that are specialized in content and yet designed for the general reader. Parent education, with several monthlies devoted to it almost exclusively, has some of the most progressive of these new specialist-direct-to-consumer periodicals.

Seeing and Believing

It is often asked whether readers of magazines and newspapers take everything they see in print on faith, or whether they are more sceptical. Both attitudes are found. There has always been a tendency for people to believe what they see in print; it has a certain visible reality. And yet some people do react with an equally unreasoning scepticism. But today, between these two extremes, there is growing up a more enlightened and more discriminating type of reading public. Such needs and tastes, as have already been suggested, are being increasingly recognized. And so the question of whether to "believe it or not" depends both on the reader and on the medium. Some publications give the impression that a statement may be open to question; whereas the information in others, in which the public has learned to have confidence, is accepted, not because it is in print, but because of the known integrity of the publication.

This is nowhere more true than in relation to what is addressed to parents. We know, for instance, that one man's meat is another man's poison in regard to reading and accepting fiction or editorial opinion. When it comes to "advice to parents" this maxim needs to be somewhat amended, for some of the advice given would be bad advice for *any* parent. As has already been pointed out, great advances have almost everywhere been made as to authenticity. But where interest is increasing as rapidly as it is in everything that pertains to children, everything written cannot possibly be equally accurate or equally wise. Not only must the parent be sure that the publication is doing its best to furnish him sound material; he must also keep his own eyes open.

The Advertiser's Responsibility

The relation between information and advertising in periodicals is one in which the public has a vital concern. Not only has there been a big improvement in the correctness of information given to the public in specific parent education material, but there has also developed a much higher ethical standard on the part of most advertisers. In this matter the advertisers are not entirely disinterested. They watch each other so carefully that if any one food manufacturer, for example, claims a vitamin too many for his product, he is almost sure to be called down by rival manufacturers. The advertisers themselves have, therefore, reached the point where they are not only willing but glad to call in expert opinion instead of depending on the fertile imaginations of advertising copy writers for their "facts."

The advertisers are in another sense at least partially responsible for the increasingly fine type of editorial content, in parent education and similar fields, in the newspapers and magazines. No magazine or newspaper could be bought for the small price its readers pay unless the difference between what it costs to produce and the price per copy were made up by the advertisers. That does not mean, in any well established newspaper or magazine, that the advertisers control the editorial content. What it does mean is the praiseworthy fact that the advertisers make it possible for the publication to furnish a high type of service to its readers at a mere fraction of its actual cost.

Changing the Habits of the Nation

The effect of this education through periodicals is incalculable. In psychological training of children it may not be so easily measurable—nor has it been so concentrated—as in nutrition; but the same principle holds. Although part of the change in our food habits is due to the food propaganda during the War, most of it, I think, is the result of the tremendous flood of information on hygienic living which during the last fifteen or twenty years has been circulated in newspapers, magazines and books. The history of wheat is concrete evidence of how far-reaching such food changes are. Although there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of *whole wheat* used, the *total* amount of wheat eaten in this country per capita has greatly decreased. If we ate as much wheat per capita as we did twenty years ago, there wouldn't be any surplus wheat problem today. We have gone on increasing the amount of wheat grown and decreasing the amount each person consumes, and the difference between those two figures is the terrible surplus under which the farmer is laboring. On the other hand, figures made up by the Department of Agriculture in Washington show us that in the ten years from 1920 to 1930 the per capita consumption of solid vegetables and fruit, especially spinach, has increased in this country 54

per cent. And here is another job for parent education. Unless mothers can learn, along with their new knowledge about food *values,* what parent educators have to tell them about food *habits,* it is altogether likely that in the next generation there won't be a shred of spinach eaten. When the children who have been forced into swallowing spinach today grow up and have children of their own, they are going to say, "No matter what else I may do, I won't insist on my children's eating spinach."

Another thing that has raised the quality of child study information is that more and more trained writers on these subjects are every year available. We no longer have to rely on editors of adventure magazines writing under the name of "Aunt Sally." In many parts of the country, universities are putting increasing emphasis on child psychology, both in connection with laboratory research and in connection with practical problems of child rearing. Child study groups are also being rapidly developed among parents themselves. All this awakening means that every year there are more people available with technical training and practical experience in dealing with children and parents. All of these may not be "experts" of the highest order. They are, however, the "picked ranks" from whom those who can write for parents will increasingly be drawn. In considering the whole question, it seems that the greatest danger facing us now in parent education is the danger of mistaking a little knowledge for a great deal. Women of today are undoubtedly much better informed on everything pertaining to the care of their homes and families than they were twenty years ago, but a great many of the subjects which they are studying are themselves still in the process of growth. We learn more about them every year. What is regarded as really true this year, is partially wrong next year. The woman who still follows the advice of ten years ago is behind the times today and this condition will not stop with our generation. You have to keep up with the times from day to day or you will find out that something which was accepted as true yesterday does not seem quite so true today.

In keeping the public informed as to the best of current thought, newspapers and magazines have two enormous advantages, in that they are current and well nigh universal. They can bring to their readers, however remote, whatever is best and most progressive from every source. Thus they perform a very real service in overcoming the educational limitations of time and space.

Primers for Parents

Distilling the combined experience of parents and of specialists is a challenging undertaking.

MARGARET J. QUILLIARD

So much knowledge of childhood has come in recent years from the pen of the expert that parents are sometimes inclined to belittle the fruits of their own experience. To offset this tendency, and to capitalize the insight, understanding and wisdom of parents themselves, an educational experiment is being developed by the Field Work Committee of the Child Study Association Leaders Group.

Since the simpler a thing is the more difficult it becomes to describe, some of these stories can best be left to speak for themselves. For example, out of the attempt to present the psychological principles of learning and of habit has grown a group of brief anecdotes based on concrete behavior situations, from which both the following are taken.

Eating Habits

Johnny is going to have his lunch. He is two years old and is learning to help himself. Let us watch him. As his baked potato, egg and spinach are nearly ready for him to eat, Johnny gets his spoon and bib. He sits at his little table and begins to feed himself. He is busy and happy. Every once in a while he spills a little of his lunch, for he has not been using his spoon long. His mother has given him enough food, however, to

make up for what he has spilled. Once in a while he smiles up at his mother or talks with her. Soon he has finished this part of his lunch.

His mother has a dish of prunes ready for him. She quietly places it on his table. He eats these as he did his vegetables and egg.

When he has finished, he finds a glass of milk on his table. He drinks this a little at a time. Soon he has finished his lunch and is ready for his afternoon nap.

The Habit of Temper Tantrums

TEN-year-old Teddy is busy playing ball with boys living in the neighborhood.

Mother—Stop your playing, Teddy, and come right into the house.

Teddy—But, mother, I'm in the middle of the game.

Mother—I can't help that. You must go to the store for a loaf of bread.

Teddy—But the boys can't finish the game without me.

Mother—They must wait until you come back. And no temper, either, Teddy.

Teddy loses his temper, throws his ball way down the street, kicks the dog in his way, rushes into the house and bangs the door, yelling, "You spoiled the game. I won't go to the store, I won't."

Some Things to Remember

EACH of these stories is accompanied by suggestions for interpreting and applying it to the reader's experience with her own children. Fear, for instance, is one of the topics under "Children's Emotions." After a narrative similar to those on eating habits and on temper tantrums, follow statements to discuss and think about which are kept within the everyday experience of the mother:

Fear of the dark, policeman, doctor and ragman is not one of the natural fears. The child generally becomes afraid of these because something has happened to make him afraid.

The parent who uses fear to make her child obey may find she has raised a very timid, fearful child.

A child may be hindered throughout his life by the fears he has learned in childhood.

Scolding or making a child ashamed about his fears is not helpful and may often be very harmful. It may only add to his unhappiness and may keep him from telling us facts about himself that we ought to know.

In discussing "Anger and Self-Defense" it seemed clearer to put the discussion into question form so that the reader will be drawn on to do her part in thinking out the story illustrating this topic:

Should Ralph have given up his pail and shovel to Ruth?

Was Ralph to blame for getting angry at Ruth?

Is it natural for a child to get angry when another child wants to take his things or spoil his fun?

Should a child be taught to control his anger?

Was it fair of Ralph's mother to blame him before she found out why Ruth was crying?

Should Ralph's mother expect him to give his toys to Ruth whenever she wants them?

Is it good for Ralph to be giving in to Ruth all the time?

Is it good for Ruth to have Ralph give in to her all the time?

Was Ralph's mother wise in making him play often with his little cousin Ruth?

Is it good for a five-year-old child to play a great deal with a three-year-old child?

Was Ralph's mother wise when she threatened to tell daddy?

At the Soda Fountain

SOMETIMES it is not the discussion but the incident itself which, even in its simplest terms, has many angles. A "drug store drama" embodies in itself even before the discussion which is to follow it, the many conflicting attitudes which confuse the adolescent and his parents. What is more, it suggests with real subtlety a liberal point of view which will be almost revolutionary to some of those whose old world point of view still looks askance at boys and girls at the soda fountain.

A jolly bunch of young people come into a soda fountain and this is what they say:

John—You order, while I phone my mother.

Mary—(John's new girl friend) teasingly—O, don't your mama know you're out?

John—Sure. But I told her I'd be home around 10:30. And if we take the bus both ways instead of the sub, I can't make it before 11:30 or 12. And you know how women are! Always worrying for fear you're run over or something! So I'll just let her know I'll be late.

Sylvia—Wonder what fairy tale he'll make up!

Bill—He won't make up any fairy tale. You just listen. I know John's mother. I've been to his house lots of times.

John's voice on the phone—Is that the janitor at 150 March Street? Hello! This is John Smith talking. Say, will you send Danny up to tell my mother I won't be home till late? Tell her not to

worry. I'm all right. Thanks a lot! So long!

Sylvia—Can you beat that? He just told her!

Bill—Yes, and he won't get razzed about it, either, when he *does* get home. She likes him to have a good time. He never has to fake excuses for being out.

Sylvia—Well, my mother is such a hen she won't let me go out with boys. I'm supposed to be over at the library right now, working on a history report!

Bill—What if your little brother should go over there and find out you weren't there, and tell her?

Sylvia—O, I've got Joey fixed! He'll not tell! It makes me sore! She treats me just like Joseph, and I'm fourteen! As if I couldn't take care of myself.

Bill—This is dumb! I'd rather have one that didn't care where I was than one that treated me like that. I have a good time when I'm out anyway!

Sylvia—My mother's all right! I like her fine. And I like my home, too. But mother *is* a *hen* about *me!* And I'm *not* a *baby chick!*

Bill—No, you're some chicken all right! Wonder if Carl Meyers' mother is like yours? But then he never seems to *want* to go anywhere.

(John joins the group again)

Mary—Well, here's our little boy scout again! He's done his kind deed, and now he can play!

John—Well, I'll have a better time if I know my mother isn't sitting up waiting for me, and stewing because I don't come. No need to spoil *her* evening when it's so little trouble to let her know.

Mary—What about the trouble for the janitor? I see *ours* paddling upstairs to tell *my* folks!

John—O, there's always some kid around he can send. He won't mind. I do things for him, too.

Venture in Cooperation

The collaborators in this venture kept constantly in mind the audience whom they were working to reach. Their specific purpose was to prepare the kind of material urgently needed by workers in neighborhood houses, industrial districts and crowded communities where families of foreign background have a limited command of English.

As a matter of convenience the term "under-privileged" was used to designate the general level upon which this material was to be developed. Lively discussion brought forth the conclusion that it is possible for a resident in a fashionable neighborhood to be as "under-privileged"—as a parent—as a dweller among crowded tenements. The latter, on the other hand, may be capable of clear, discriminating thinking—even though "schooling" may have been scant or lacking. It was finally agreed, however, that lack of formal education, meager income and limited social contacts tend toward a level of intellectual activity which does not cope successfully with material, complex either in content or phraseology. This process of definition and evaluation was kept close to reality through the experience of members of the group. This threw light upon typical housing conditions, family and neighborhood life, interests, resources, problems and traditional attitudes.

In the actual development of the various series of stories, the group was divided into sub-committees, each with a chairman. They worked with great freedom, and only enough guidance and co-operation to insure continuity. The members of each sub-committee chose their subjects and sub-topics out of their own varied experiences as parents and leaders. The results are—as is evident from the "samples" already quoted — equally varied. One series of stories stresses familiar parent-child relationship situations; another deals with behavior situations in childhood; another traces new steps in habit and learning; and still another illustrates ways of guiding children's emotions. The relative position of brothers and sisters and the friendships of adolescent boys and girls complete the repertoire.

With a Homely Touch

But none of them appear under the phrases familiar to the psychologist. Rather, they reflect the day-by-day experiences of the parents and children who are both their inspiration and their ultimate goal. They put their most human side foremost in such familiar scenes as: "A Game of Jacks," "In and Out of the Vegetable Store," "The Teacher's Advice," "The Child's Love Interest," "A Will of Her Own," "Long Pants and Large Plans" and "Shall They Quarrel?"

All this grew only after careful planning, and even sacrifice on the part of the members of the group, most of whom are housekeepers and mothers, with all of the obligations and responsibilities involved, yet with a keen interest in passing on their experience to others. Either in spite of, or because of, this double pressure, the work went steadily forward. In only a winter the workers overcame the great difficulties of putting scientific information and experience into simple language—and only those who have tried to do this know how great these difficulties are. The material is now being tried out

both in study groups and by individual mothers. In addition the advisory group of the Field Work Committee is itself criticizing each set of material.

As to precisely what the ultimate outcome will be, no one as yet knows. As a project in leadership training, its value cannot be doubted by one who has watched growth and development take place in the committee members. As a channel for using the wisdom of parental experience, it is of unquestioned worth. As a means of showing mothers how to analyze and use their own experiences productively for the benefit of others, it is mutually enriching.

What it has meant to those who have actually worked it out step by step is summed up by one of them: "In any field so few do original, much less creative work. We usually read, listen, absorb, memorize and give back words and ideas, without making them truly our own. In this piece of work, on the other hand, a process of choice, selection, thought, analysis and clothing of ideas in suitable words was constantly taking place. To me the work has been creative and has meant constant growth."

Beyond this personal experience of growth, this experiment gives promise of a deepening cooperation between the specialist and the parent. From the parent's long continued, twenty-four-hour-a-day intimacy with her own is born an understanding of all boys and girls, and finally, an ability to interpret and evaluate their behavior and parents' ways of meeting it. This accumulation of parental insight and wisdom, together with the resourcefulness which often accompanies it, is peculiarly significant in the development of parent education. Too often the potential contribution from fathers and mothers has been ignored, due to lack of recognition of its value or to lack of understanding by parents themselves, as to how to analyze and interpret these experiences for others. Conservation of the parent's own experience, through checking it against the best scientific data available and putting it into simple, usable form, is what has concerned us so mightily in this educational venture.

To See Ourselves

In the light of Floyd Dell's theory of fiction as externalized phantasy, the Leaders Group of the Child Study Association reviewed the use of fiction both in study groups and for individual reading. Perhaps it is drawing a distinction without making a difference to single out the books we read *as parents*. All is grist to the family mill, and whether a man or woman finds pleasure in Shakespeare or detective stories affects him in his parental capacity. And yet a certain kind of fiction, particularly the novel of "realism," does have special meaning to the reader in the role of parent.

In the early days of study groups the reading and discussion of novels like Barrie's *Sentimental Tommie* and Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* was a popular procedure. But learning through fiction has more recently fallen, if not into disrepute, at least into disuse. There seem to be two excellent reasons for this change—so excellent that they may have blinded us to the still remaining good points of novel reading as a means of parent education.

Of these, the simplest and most obvious is the fact that parents now have at their command a greatly enriched literature of parent education; they no longer have to depend on reading about the more or less imaginary trials and tribulations in family novels. Whereas in the early days there were no "serious" books dealing with family problems (which seldom or never achieved the dignity of print except in fiction) today there are so many books in which parents get their education "straight" that they feel they can scarcely keep up with these more direct sources, let alone novels.

A second and much more subtle trend away from utilizing fiction for this purpose has grown out of the realization of that quality of fiction which Mr. Dell also stressed—that neither the writing nor the reading of fiction is primarily an intellectual experience, but belongs mainly to the realm of the emotions.

At some point in the development of any serious study it often seems temporarily logical to argue that what does not direct itself to the intellect does not "educate." And so as parent education became more aware of itself as education, it turned more and more away from "feeling" and toward "thinking."

But now we are again able to see that understanding with the heart is at least as important as understanding with the mind, and the question comes up again of whether the vicarious living through the imagined experience does not have a real place of its own as "education of the emotions." We must realize very definitely that good fiction, like good drama, gives us these lessons in a much more telling way than anything else can do. Take a play, for instance, and note what a chore it would be to memorize the cast of characters without having seen or

(*Continued on page* 210)

Study Group Department

CÉCILE PILPEL, Director
JOSETTE FRANK, Editor

Parents' requests for reading material suggest a wide range of individual needs and uses. Specific titles will often serve the precise situation; but in the following requests, there are wider implications which must be taken into account in the reading recommendations offered by the Bibliography Service of the Child Study Association.

BERTHE GOODKIND

SOMEHOW, despite the modern attitude of critical analysis and doubt, the traditional awe and respect for the printed word still persists. In parents' requests for reference reading there is revealed a wide variety of needs and purposes, ranging from the general to the specific. One parent, aware of her need for a more comprehensive understanding of child nature, asks for books on child psychology. Another, unable to cope with some perplexing manifestation of child behavior, seeks specific help—a book of recipes to apply to definite situations. Many of these parental needs may legitimately be served by wisely selected reading. For many others the printed page alone cannot supply the wanted cure-all. In the latter case the book will serve only insofar as it suggests its own limitations and stimulates the parent to further search for insight and self-understanding.

Could you suggest some books that will bring out certain points such as courtesy, kindness, hygiene, faith? My son is six months old, and perhaps you will think that I am crossing the bridge before I get to it. But my father brought me up in a very strict way, and I do want my child to have the advantages I did not have.

HERE the parent, to compensate for the difficulties and restrictions of her own childhood, is attempting to calm the waters and assure her child's unruffled sailing through life. She may well use literature of information such as the discussion of routines and habits in Douglas A. Thom's *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child,* and in the January, 1932, issue of CHILD STUDY on *Routine, Initiative and Responsibility.* But beyond this she has need for the type of literature in mental hygiene grouped under the heading of "parent-child relationships." The chapter on "Mental Hygiene and Childhood" in Groves and Blanchard's book, *Introduction to Mental Hygiene* might serve this purpose.

I would like to ask your opinion as to what are the best books on guiding a child's mental growth. I think my six-year-old daughter is too shy, not in playing with children, but in meeting older people and in talking to them.

BOOKS like Arnold Gesell's *Guidance of Mental Growth in Infant and Child* point to age norms in social behavior, and it is in such literature that this mother may learn what to expect from her six-year-old in meeting older people. She needs also to know that no small factor in such situations is the way adults behave in meeting six-year-olds. Some of the more subtle and complex causes and implications of "shyness" are well discussed in Frances G. Wickes' *The Inner World of Childhood.*

What books can I get on subnormal children and the different types of feebleminded, their characteristics, and so on?

THIS request comes by letter from a small town in Southern California. The writer may be concerned with a situation of her own or perhaps with that of a neighbor to whom she wishes to pass on the information. She evidently uses the term "feeblemindedness" very loosely. Subnormality ranges in degree from the dull retarded through various types of moron, to feeblemindedness. Books pointing out these factors are available. One might suggest John Morgan's *Psychology of the Unadjusted School Child.* But the reading of such literature will not suffice in cases of this kind; it is important for the adult interested in such a child to secure the expert advice of a psychologist

or psychiatrist as to procedure. Such a request must therefore be met by recommending not merely reading, but also the nearest mental hygiene clinic.

We have three small children, and during my few spare moments I would like to study child psychology to aid in raising our family properly.

THE inquiry, which made an immediate call for sympathy, was part of a note which indicated the average household where "spare moments" mean rare freedom from household duties and physical child care. In suggesting reading for this busy mother, it is necessary to include, besides factual information on physical care, discipline and establishing routines, also the kind of reading which may give her a perspective on child development so that she may be enabled to see the woods despite the surrounding trees. Such books as *Your Child Today and Tomorrow,* by Sidonie M. Gruenberg and *The Management of Young Children,* by Blatz and Bott, will serve this double purpose.

Having five children, no two of the same temperament, I ask you kindly to send whatever literature you may have concerning training.

THE question reveals an awareness of what biologists and psychologists term "variations" and "individual differences." This parent's interests and needs call for a simple presentation of biological aspects of heredity, supplemented by a discussion of the role of environment as it affects children of the same family. Although commendable attempts have been made to present this material in simple form for the average lay reader, there is still a dearth of really readable discussion, both of the scientific aspects and of their application in education. One might wish that such material as H. S. Jennings' *The Biological Basis of Human Nature* and Blanche Weill's *The Behavior of Young Children of the Same Family* could be reduced to more simple terms. A chapter on "Ideas Regarding Heredity" in Mary B. Sayles' book, *The Problem Child at Home,* and two pamphlets of the Child Study Association, *Individual Differences* and *What Do Children Inherit?* will be of service to the interested inquirer.

I have a five-month-old baby girl and I am eager to read the very newest ideas of child training.

THIS question often arises: is the newest idea necessarily the best idea to pass on to a mother?

The "newest" idea, coming directly from the laboratory with its scientific setting and measuring apparatus, undoubtedly contains educational elements which eventually may be translated into usable terms. We have also to remember that much is published which is still considered controversial. This is true even of such supposedly "settled" questions as the treatment of thumb sucking, and the training of bladder and bowel control. In advising the young mother of a first infant, it is best, all things considered, to recommend publications from those authorities who are concerned with both the physical and emotional development, and whose deductions have been based on a rich and varied experience. There are a number of such recent books available—they represent not necessarily "the newest" but certainly the current and the well tried. Among these, H. C. Cameron's *The Nervous Child* applies equally to *all* children, as does also the child psychologist's approach in *Home Guidance for Young Children* by Grace Langdon.

I would like a book to guide me in the training of my eight-month-old girl. I have had no previous experience with children and do not seem to have that natural knack some people have in the handling of children. Also, I have never studied psychology.

THE "natural knack" in handling refers to doing for the child physically. There are people who for some reason, physiological perhaps, if one were to probe for cause, feel awkward in doing for an infant, no matter how great their sympathy and love. This mother may find it consoling to know that there are many such mothers; but the important factor here is her desire to be at least intelligently equipped to do for the child. Fortunately one can supply such reading, not alone books concerned with the physical factors, as in *The Home Care of the Infant and Child,* by Tisdall, but also *A Practical Psychology of Babyhood* by Jessie C. Fenton. The term "psychology" still looms as a mysterious catch-word for getting results, especially in child behavior.

I am very much interested in the proper development of my three grandchildren who are between one and four years old. I want the satisfaction of helping their little minds develop. To do all I want to, I think I must have a book about child psychology.

THIS letter from a grandmother in no way reveals the identity of the parent nor whether the interested grandmother is paternally or maternally related. This is a somewhat delicate situation in which to give advice. Does the grand-

mother perchance feel the need of educating the parent? It might be wise to include among reading recommendations not only books on child development and child psychology, but also on the mental hygiene aspects of family living, the interrelation of the family triangle, and the relationships of extra-family members. For material in mental development this grandmother might profit by reading H. Crichton Miller's *The New Psychology and the Parent* rather than the more technical but splendid contributions of John J. B. Morgan's *Child Psychology.* The family picture is well presented in the October, 1931, issue of CHILD STUDY, dealing with *Keynotes of Family Living.*

This is the first school year of my little girl (six years), and I feel that she does not take the interest in her work I would like for her to. I feel, too, that I have failed in my part of encouraging her.

PARENTS ever continue to be concerned as to how they can function in the school life of the child. This child may have been called on to step from the free activities of the kindergarten or home into an atmosphere of formal teaching. Another possible factor involved might be the change in teacher to whom a six-year-old might find it difficult to adjust. The anxious mother asks for pamphlets or books to help her meet the situation. Readings on "mental hygiene and the school," and "home and school cooperation," may help the mother realize that what she considers failure on her part may be due to a misplacing of emphasis in the school functioning; but beyond this she needs also to understand what she may expect of a six-year-old, especially in a new world—the first grade. In *The Problem Child in School,* by Sayles and Nudd, the presentation of school situations is based on sound psychology and human understanding. Angelo Patri's *School and Home* deals also with the social needs of parents and children in relation to school problems.

Will you please suggest reading which will give me some idea what to do with my little son who is extremely contrary to every single thing, and extremely unfriendly to everyone.

HERE, as with many other requests, one feels the lack of sufficient data to throw light on the behavior situation, and on which to base reading recommendations. *My Child Will . . . My Child Won't . . . What Shall I Do?* is the title of a pamphlet of the Child Study Association which will undoubtedly prove helpful to this parent. Furthermore this situation, unless it can be reduced entirely to physical causes, involves interaction of human relationships. On that basis, the selection of a book must, besides giving definite suggestions on how to meet the needs of an active two and a half year old child, include also some aspects of the interrelation of home conditions and the family members. Thom's *Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child* might help here.

Would it be wiser to let the child read about sex himself, or to tell him about it?

OUT-NUMBERING other requests perhaps, are the requests for books and pamphlets on "how to answer children's questions." Despite the seeming "freedom" of our modern utterances on sex, parents in general are still hesitant and self-conscious in giving sex information. Some, having heard of certain pamphlets and books for children, hope that these may offer a "way out."

The young child's questions usually call for the simplest explanations, and these the mother can equip herself to answer through her own reading of authoritative literature, such as B. C. Gruenberg's *Parents and Sex Education.* Two pamphlets of the Child Study Association, *When Children Ask About Babies* and *Sex Education* may also be helpful, the latter containing also a section applying to adolescence. Material on sex information or sex education suitable for the young child to read for himself, is, however, very scant—and this is not wholly to be lamented. Since the matter of sex education is a continuous process it is far better that the mother be prepared with knowledge and insight progressively to meet the child's needs in this respect.

What book, or books, would you recommend as being most suitable to place in the hands of a fourteen-year-old girl? This child has had no training in sex.

THIS is a more difficult situation. Here the parent needs to realize that a fourteen-year-old girl certainly has had some interest in, and has heard some discussion of, sex matters, even though the mother may never had any conversations with her; also that it will be most difficult for such a child to begin at fourteen years of age to be guided by the mother. No doubt the mother also seeks the reassurance that her daughter will know how to guide herself amidst the dangers to

which she will be exposed. "Sex education" possibly means to this mother rules and standards in regard to sex life, and guidance for this child in her relations with the opposite sex. Helpful guidance in sex education must be given by the parent progressively to meet the interest and needs of the different age periods in the child's life. This mother's task will be the more difficult because her fourteen-year-old girl is near sexual maturity and will have greater difficulty, therefore, in concerning herself with purely factual knowledge.

Reading alone will not meet the needs of this girl. Her need is for contact with a mature person, who can help her make intelligent use of factual knowledge and give her the guidance which is due her. The mother will need insight into what the situation now demands of her, and in this respect she might find helpful *The Adolescent Girl* by Winifred Richmond and *The Sex Life of Youth* by Elliott and Bone. The girl herself might profit by reading *Growing Up* by Karl de Schweinitz, for purely factual knowledge, and Elliott and Bone's *The Sex Life of Youth* for standards and guidance.

I want some information on subnormal cases, sex perversion: detailed information on manipulation—causes, effects, methods of treatment for cure.

OCCASIONALLY, as in this case, a parent's request illustrates confusion of terminology, or misunderstanding of actual behavior manifestation. Here the term "manipulation" means "masturbation," and this behavior, irrespective, seems to indicate in this mother's opinion "sex perversion." In such cases the printed page can be definitely helpful in clearing up misconceptions. A wholesome attitude is found in Jessie Taft's pamphlet, *Some Undesirable Habits and Suggestions as to Treatment,* published by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Case studies are discussed in Mary B. Sayles' *The Problem Child at Home* and Phyllis Blanchard's *The Child and Society.* J. F. Meagher's *A Study of Masturbation and the Psycho-Sexual Life* is more specific.

One might go on ad infinitum listing the varied parental problems concerning which the printed word is consulted—from such specific matters as toys and play or the care of pets, to the more inclusive, like adolescence or responsibility.

An important consideration in recommending reading to parents is the reader's background and ability to interpret and make use of the material. For those who need the simple and familiar there is an increasing body of interpretive literature which presents scientific findings in the language of common practice. Reading in semi-technical form will be directly helpful only insofar as the reader is able to interpret its content for herself.

The availability of the literature is also a factor in the parents' reading. Certain types of material may be procured at the libraries in big urban centers; but in many of the smaller towns and rural sections which offer limited library facilities only standard and well-known literature is available. Parents so situated may often find valuable material in current periodicals and pamphlets.

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The Child and Society
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Book Reviews

On Choosing Books

"WHAT constitutes a good book for parents?" is one of those questions which cannot be answered without asking another. And so, before attempting to evaluate the books offered it, the Bibliography Committee of the Child Study Association asks, "What parents?"

What may be a very good book for Mrs. X. may be really bad for Mrs. Y. and quite useless for Mrs. Z. In setting its standards of selection the Committee, therefore, seems to have built up more or less out of its own collective consciousness a "portrait of a reading parent."

This reading parent clearly belongs to a certain very large group of our population—the group which we most often speak of rather vaguely as "intelligent laymen." In its efforts to be more specific, the Committee would say that this intelligent layman is one who is accustomed to reading books, both for pleasure and for information. In his (or her) capacity as parent this general familiarity with books simply comes into play in relation to more specific needs.

In a certain very real sense this hypothetical parent represents a composite of the tastes and needs and ideals of the Committee members. For the Committee represents many varieties of experience and interest and point of view—from the gay to the serious, from the social conservative to the intellectual radical, from the beginner discovering her own needs through the needs of a first baby, to the professional psychologist and educator.

The result is something like the proverbial wisdom of "shaking opposites up in a bag together"; group standards do emerge. Of course there are few books that appeal equally to all. Sometimes a book's pros and cons (to say nothing of the Committee members' personal likes and dislikes) are spiritedly argued.

Standards of Criticism

BUT while each reader is likely to weight these criteria a little differently, and while no book will completely fulfill them all, the following specifications fairly represent the Committee's measure of a good book for parents. The qualities which are likely to stand out may vary, but these can usually be recognized.

Style and Organization—"Readableness" is one essential which, unfortunately, cannot be taken for granted. Another is integration; a real grasp of the subject which is more than logical arrangement and arbitrary sequence. This implies that the author has set himself a well defined job and is keeping to it. This quality may be equally apparent in an informal collection of essays and when embodied in all the equipment of chapter summaries and topical headings.

Point of View—No author can hide his own light under a bushel of terminology; it makes an enormous difference to the reader whether it is illuminating or merely incendiary. Sincerity a writer must have; and beyond sincerity, a certain conviction of the inherent worthiness of what he has to say. And yet he should be without bias and able to look at his subject objectively, even when others disagree with him. If what he has to say is controversial, he should be able to defend his own point of view clearly and convincingly without descending to dogmatism. But dignity is not synonymous with dullness, or even, necessarily, with a "serious tone." In the right place a light touch is more effective than a sermon.

Information—Accuracy is a prime requisite everywhere, but it is doubly important in all presentations of scientific and technical material. Writers who attempt to bring this essential information to laymen accept the double responsibility of explaining scientific facts so that not even the untrained can, by implication, read into them the wrong meaning.

At this point the literature of parent education turns an important corner in its development. Not so long ago *any* book which furnished accurate scientific data for parents was *per se* a good book, because there were so few of them. Today this is no longer true. The veritable flood of popular writing based on science has made it necessary for us to pick and choose. And so today we ask not only

of a given informational book whether it is accurate, but in addition we ask that it do one of four things. Does it recapitulate already published material in a clearer and more helpful form? Does it give a clear picture of research and experimental findings not generally known? Does it give an unbiased account of a special, perhaps still controversial, theory? Or, finally, is the author so outstanding an authority that his reputation as a creative thinker makes whatever he has to say important?

Guidance—Unlike scientists, parents are not interested in knowledge for its own sake, but are looking rather for guidance in the training of their children. And so they always ask of a book, "Is it helpful?" But the help they need is of many sorts, and books may offer wise counsel on all kinds of problems from recipes to religion. It is actually possible to classify these needs on a sort of sliding scale which really does have recipes at one end and religion, or whatever one's philosophy of life may be called, at the other. Books which discuss diets and the reasons for them are typical of the recipes in guidance, but with them may be grouped the hardly less specific handbooks which discuss simple techniques in child training.

Yet even these necessary primers must be based on a knowledge of child development and psychological principles of training. And an increasing number of books now address themselves to parents who are already consciously aware of fundamentals; discussion tends to be centered less on techniques and more on this background of sound psychological principles or on what might be called the "philosophy of parent education."

In addition to these books which throw light on the child and his world and on parent-child relationships, parents are increasingly seeking to broaden their own outlook, to clarify their own thinking about themselves, their children and their world. This growing interest in religion, philosophy and sociology among parents as parents is perhaps their outstanding characteristic today.

Reversing the Picture

If the acceptable are marked by certain qualities of style, point of view, information and guidance, it might seem only too obvious that unacceptable books would be marked by their opposites. And this is true so far as it goes. No book that is carelessly written or inaccurate (and some still are both), that is biased or dull, or shallow or flippant, or simply ineffective need be recommended when so much first-rate work is available.

But in addition to these negative books and to those which actually counsel unsound practices, there are others which do not pass muster. Some publications, even of research, in the child development field are too trivial; others, of unquestioned value to the scientist, are too technical or too specialized. Some tred well worn paths without adding anything new even in presentation. Certain otherwise sound books are confusing, or excessively long or peculiarly hard to read. And then there are those that indulge in sentimentalisms and in glittering generalities—but of all these, the less said, the better.

Books Without End

Because of the rapid increase in the number of books, still more because of the growth in our actual knowledge about child development and human relationships, we now have to face another complex question of choice—What about the books which were considered the "last word" twenty or ten or even five years ago? Because our information and our ideas have grown, shall we throw our gospels of yesterday into the discard?

Of course the first misconception was to think of any book, no matter how good, as final. There is no "last word." The most any of us, writers or readers, can say is, "This is as far as we have gone today." If we remember that all knowledge and all wisdom is relative, we will not need to throw into the discard outstanding contributions of other years simply because we have passed the point at which they were crystallized between the covers of a book.

Beyond Analysis

Picking out the good qualities of a book is like dissecting anything which has true vitality. The breath of life escapes analysis. Recognizing this, the Committee wishes to record its own ideal, looked for in every book and found—if not in all "acceptable" books—at least in an inspiring majority. This is something which makes the reading an experience, an enrichment which the parent passes on to his children, not only through improved techniques, but more subtly through his own attitudes. He has been helped in one way or another to see for himself these age-old problems in the light of today. The book which can do this for even a few readers possesses something more than "book learning"—a wisdom, however intangible, that carries conviction as to the worthiness of even the details in human relationships.

In the Magazines

Contented Parents. By Alice D. Kelly. Child Welfare, February 1932.

An account of live family conflicts which either mar or make for "contented" parenthood, with suggestions for constructive ways of handling them.

Does Money Make the Marriage Go? By Chase Going Woodhouse. The Survey Graphic, January 1932.

A study of married people's attitude toward money, based on the "actual behavior and practice of sixty-eight families" successful "in the sense that husband and wife were well adjusted to each other, and to the outside world, and were doing a good piece of work in bringing up their children." The discussion is confined to details of handling the family finance, pre-marital training for the worth of the dollar, and to "the wife who works or has an independent income."

Experimental Possibilities in the Public Schools. By Edna R. Meyers. Progressive Education, January 1932.

The program of a "new" summer school in Chicago is discussed in its relation to the program of the academic year.

A Homemade Nursery School. By Eleanor Hussey Smith. Child Welfare, February 1932.

In considering how the home can provide nursery school advantages for the young child, one must take into account the necessity of supplying not only well chosen toys and the right kind of physical equipment to encourage "self-help," but opportunities for social contacts with children of the same age as well.

Mental Hygiene in the School. By William H. Burnham. Mental Hygiene, January 1932.

This article sets up criteria for mental health and makes a plea that mental, as well as physical, health of children be taken into consideration by the school. To develop "healthful habits of mental activities" is a task which the school is neglecting.

Parent Education. By Winifred Rand. Journal of Home Economics, February 1932.

An interesting paper pointing to the intrinsic values of parent education as they affect all parents, with special emphasis on the role played by the social worker.

A Philosopher Looks at Mental Hygiene. By John M. MacEachran. Mental Hygiene, January 1932.

A very interesting article indicating the contribution of the philosophers of ancient Greece to modern mental hygiene.

Progressive Education Enters a Second Phase. By Burton P. Fowler. Progressive Education, January 1932.

Mr. Fowler calls attention to the fact that so-called "progressive education" is no longer confined to the educational laboratory represented by the "small experimental private school and individual units of progressive schools." We now find scattered all over in many schools, both private and public, adaptations of "the most promising results of educational investigations." The Progressive Education Association desires to serve as a clearing house for the purpose of serving increasingly larger numbers of teachers with the results of these scattered experimentations.

Ups and Downs in Family Life. By Benjamin C. and Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg. The Parents' Magazine, February 1932.

A picture of parenthood and family living is presented, with its aims, achievements and frustrations clearly pointed out by specific illustrations. In conclusion, the authors say, "In order to conduct the affairs of a family satisfactorily, our search should be not for standardization, but for that flexibility that will make possible the meeting of individual needs, the adjustment to new situations."

When They Go to School. By Frank Howard Richardson. The Woman's Home Companion, February 1932.

Adventures in the training of attitudes which both the home and the school offer to the three participants concerned—the parent, the teacher and the child—illustrated by practical situations.

Why Family Harmony? By Thomas D. Eliot. Mental Hygiene, January 1932.

The concept that harmony in family life always produces a good effect on the child, and disharmony always creates emotional maladjustments, is seriously questioned in this article. Dr. Eliot believes that harmony alone is not enough. "Such harmonies as are essential to the child's welfare will come, not from seeking harmony as an end, but as a by-product of intelligent interaction."

News and Notes

Fathers and the White House Conference

To any small boy of four Dad is a hero—a person who knows how to overcome all difficulties, one around whom the known world revolves, a person greatly to be admired. As the boy grows older will his father's living example translate the early hero worship into a happy bond of comradeship?

How seriously American fathers are taking the job of father has been emphasized in the February issue of CHILD STUDY which included a symposium on "Fathers and Parent Education." That they are actually studying it as they would any trade or profession, is again pointed out in the report on "The Family and Parent Education" recently presented to Secretary Wilbur, Chairman of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. The Committee appointed to make this study, of which a brief summary follows, was headed by Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture; Mrs. Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Director of the Child Study Association of America, was chairman of the subcommittee on types of parent education.

The Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit was probably one of the first to emphasize the point that the father is not merely a provider, that the child has "parents" not just "the parent."

An effort to reach another group of parents has been made at one of the Infant Welfare Stations in Detroit where classes were started to help mothers forestall the problems which bring them and their children to the Behavior Clinic. "During the unemployment period," the report states, "the fathers often came to the clinic and the classes," for they had begun to appreciate that with children, as with machines, prevention is better than cure.

From the beginning fathers were admitted to the classes for parents which were established by the State Department of Education in Oklahoma, and "It was they," the report states, "who persuaded the mothers to overcome the timidity and discuss their problems in groups."

Among the organizations which like the American Association of University Women, the Child Study Association of America, and the National Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations are providing leaders in parent-education in the different states, the Federal Board for Vocational Education is one which is aiding many fathers who want to know how to do a better job.

All over these United States, north, south, east and west, fathers are looking at the job of fathers from a new angle, that of human relationships. As they watch with new interest, sympathy and understanding the activities and character traits and personalities of their sons and daughters, they may even seek the adventure and stimulus of leading a group of fathers in their discussion of this job of being a father.

Science, Tools and Techniques

The New York Biology Teachers' Association announces an exhibit to be held in the American Museum of Natural History from March 12 through 26. This exhibit illustrates inexpensive ways and means of making science a vital experience to children. The material motivates teaching techniques to interpret the Stars, Earth, Plants, Animals and Mankind for the elementary school child.

Mrs. Marguerite E. Schwarzman, director of the Children's Laboratories and instructor in New York University, has conceived and arranged the exhibit.

What Shall the Family See and Hear?

The variety of things offered for the entertainment and education of children places quite a burden on parents who attempt to make an adequate selection for a particular child. This is especially true because advance information is necessary in order to make the most of the available time. The Parents Association of the Horace Mann Schools has worked for years to develop its *Bulletin* so that it will be a real help in solving this problem. The *Bulletin,* issued every two weeks, includes a calendar of future events in New York City likely to appeal to members of the Association and their children of varying ages. The *Bulletin* provides the parents with a comprehensive list scheduled under Music, Art, Science, Travel, Theatres, Motion Pictures, Books and Meetings for

Parents. In addition to dates a brief summary of each event is included. This calendar is carefully edited by a board of mothers of the Parents Association. Sample copies may be obtained by writing to Mrs. John W. Remer, Room 309A, Horace Mann School, Broadway and 120 Street, New York City.

Children of Today and Problems of Tomorrow

Two symposia—"Children and Money" and "College of Tomorrow"—were held at the Headquarters of the Child Study Association during the month of February. Harold T. Clark, Leonard Blumgart and Sidonie M. Gruenberg participated in the first of these meetings giving three distinct points of view—that of the economist, the psychiatrist and the parent education specialist. The May issue of CHILD STUDY will be based in part on these discussions, together with other articles on this topic.

The second symposium dealt with the problems of youth and how the college of tomorrow intends to meet them. The speakers were Robert Leigh, Vivian Thayer and Clarence Linton, and their contributions will be reported briefly in next month's CHILD STUDY.

Motion Pictures and Education

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures held its eighth annual conference in New York on January 21 and 22 to consider the motion picture as a medium for social benefits apart from its use as entertainment. Heretofore, an appreciation of the films has been based almost entirely on their value in the field of recreation, but interest in their more specialized forms has been steadily growing. In response to this interest the Conference this year was concerned with the films as teachers and cultural guides for a more scientific way of training the minds of both children and adults.

Noted authorities presented different phases of the subject covering such topics as "How the Specialized Motion Picture Is Being Developed," "What the Motion Picture Means to Visual Education," "Vitalized Learning in Science," "The Motion Picture as a Teaching Device in the New York City Schools," "Testing Responses to Experimental Specialized Films," "The Motion Picture and Parent Education," "The Specialized Use of Motion Pictures in Public Recreation" and "Children and the Motion Picture."

With the specialists in education and the film producers already working together, the one great need is for the public, particularly parents, to join forces with them in order to introduce into general use a new instrument in mental and social training.

Clipping the Daily Papers

In the midst of war, depression, politics and crime in one's favorite newspaper, there is still room for a surprisingly large amount of copy pertaining particularly to parents. During November, 1931, a survey of ten metropolitan dailies was made by Mrs. Cora Trawick Court, a graduate student in parent education at the Child Development Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University. This survey revealed that there was not a single paper in New York which did not regularly carry news of special interest to parents. Though the particular kind of material varied according to the individual paper, parent education could everywhere be found either in the news columns, on the editorial page, in the special features or the question-and-answer columns. Whether one prefers to read about the many sides of the birth control discussion, or a defense of the "flappers of ten years ago as efficient mothers now," or an interview in which A. A. Milne declares that his "hardest job is being a father"—he will find many articles to suit his taste. Letters on "how one wise mother dealt with her baby's first love affair" and "should two generations be pals?" may be informal, but they give suggestions which are more often than not fairly sound, and are keyed to meet an ever-widening public.

Study of Fifty Home Libraries

An investigation of fifty home libraries with special reference to their function in child development was conducted in a city of 6000 people by the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. The data for the study were gained through interviews with the mothers and through actual examination of the reading materials found in each family library. A great variation in the size, occupational interests, racial and educational backgrounds of the families was evident, and it is believed that a fair cross-section of the community was secured.

Records were made of the total number of newspapers, magazines and books in each of the fifty homes. The favorites were the local paper and the Chicago Tribune; Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Saturday Evening Post, Woman's World, The Literary Digest, National Geographic, The Parents' Magazine and Child Study; Galloway's *Parents and the Character Training of Children*, Waddle's *Introduction to Child Psychology*, Gruenberg's *Guidance of Childhood and Youth* and Tanner's *The Child*. The average subscription per family was found to be two for newspapers, five for magazines, less than one for magazines on child study, and two for books on child development. As

over half of the books were popular rather than scientific, it is evident that the facts and principles given in such books need special safeguards for accuracy and clearness.

Inasmuch as the special interest of the investigation was in regard to the home library as an agency of child development, the child's reading matter is particularly significant. The most popular magazines were Child Life, American Boy, Young Crusader, Junior Home and Youth's Companion, with an average of one subscription per family. Of the one hundred and fifty books found to be the average number per home, twenty-two were for the children.

Their literary merit was very low as measured by the criteria established in this study. In these homes children's books seem to have been selected principally on the basis of interest with little regard to the age and grade suitability for the children of a given home. Practically all the books were adapted to one or two age levels. Hence some children had an abundance of appropriate reading material, whereas other children in the same family had none.

In the homes included in this survey the size of the library appears to be decreasing. This statement is based on the testimony of mothers that crowded living conditions and frequent moving make the ownership of large libraries impossible, even where the cost of books is not an important economic factor. The general trend is to substitute newspaper and magazine material for books.

There are, of course, definite limitations to this investigation. For one thing the size of the group studied is small, and obviously data obtained from fifty families, though they be representative, need not necessarily apply to homes in general. It is equally clear that all information is to be interpreted only as indicating possible tendencies. For example, when the fifty homes were classified according to the educational status of the parents, there was a relative increase in the size of the home library, and a uniform improvement in the quality.

There is a definite need, at least in the locality in which this survey was made, for a parents' free book review service which would give critical evaluations of children's books and help to counteract the effects of high-powered salesmanship.

There also seems to be an urgent need for the rewriting of child study materials for various levels of educational background. Much of the authentic child study material which is at present recommended to parents is written in a technical manner which presupposes college training.

GERTRUDE HILL NYSTROM.

Art for Children

THE Art Committee of the Child Study Association will hold its third annual exhibit at Headquarters from March 17 through April 9. Suggestions for children's rooms worked out by various designers will be exhibited. Childhood, Inc. will show a baby's crib that is convertible into a day bed when the child is older and other interesting features. Gilbert Rohde has designed a special play corner for a two-year-old. The Children's Center has planned a sleeping arrangement for a child of about six, and rooms for older children are being designed by Marianne von Allesch and others. The Committee has also asked children of about fourteen years of age to send in sketches showing their ideas. Special aquaria are being arranged by Harriet Frazier Openchowska.

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To See Ourselves

(*Continued from page* 199)

read the play. But in the course of its development, all the characters become placed and identified.

In reading some of our modern books, which throw so much light on adolescence or early childhood or on adult family relationships, the parents' own experiences are thus enriched; it is almost as if they had had all these other children, as well as their own. What such a novel does to the sympathetic reader is to open up his own well of experience. To whatever extent is possible for him, he sees his own experiences more clearly.

Though this may be a far cry from "educational literature" it is still educative in the widest sense of the word, according to a group of twenty-five graduate students in parent education at Teachers College, Columbia University, who recently wrote papers on novels which had meaning for them in relation to their more academic work. Their individual choices ranged from Dorothy Canfield Fisher's books, *The Deepening Stream, The Bent Twig, The Home-Maker,* through Hugh Walpole's *Jeremy, Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *Trott and His Little Sister* by André Lichtenberger, to *Finch's Fortune* by Mazo de La Roche, *The Well of Loneliness* by Radcliff Hall, *Arrowsmith* by Sinclair Lewis, *The Way of All Flesh* by Samuel Butler, *My Antonia* by Willa Cather, *Father and Son* by Edmund Gosse and *The Perennial Bachelor* by Anne Parrish.

Experience as a study group member tends to make one realize that solitary reading is not always a real help in self-realization. It is all too easy in a story to identify one's own fault-finding of the other fellow. When Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* was first published everyone kept "passing it on to so-and-so who needs it so much," without realizing that hardly any of us could really escape its criticism.

It is clearly true, as Mr. Dell points out, that we read into a story only what we have at least in part experienced ourselves. And it is equally true that we resist reading in it what we may not want to know about ourselves. Group discussion of books thus comes to have a special value. For to achieve self-realization through vicarious experience takes more practice, skill and courage than most of us can muster alone—as Robert Burns (who certainly was not a very courageous realist) unconsciously admitted when he put it off on the Deity and prayed

> "O wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursel's as ithers see us!"

ZILPHA CARRUTHERS FRANKLIN.

Grown-Up Books for Young People

However plentifully we may keep our young readers supplied with suitable "books for children," sooner or later they are going to reach out to wider horizons. How shall we help our boys and girls to bridge this gap between the sheltered selection of the so-called "juveniles" and the wide world of unselected adult reading?

The transition from those books written especially for children to those which are addressed to mature readers seems most easy in the field of narrative adventure. The boy or girl of fourteen whose interest runs in this direction will revel in accounts of scientific exploration. *The Ascent of Everest* by Noel, Byrd's and Amundsen's accounts of their voyages, Roy Chapman Andrew's report of anthropological discoveries in Mongolia, though intended primarily for adults, will find eager readers as well among youthful seekers for the thrills of vicarious adventure. From such stories of sturdy courage young readers may gain a sense of reality and romance, of fine values and of striving, in keeping with the eager idealism of youth itself. These books are given to boys and girls without cavil and without hesitancy, even by otherwise too cautious parents.

Historical tales also are recognized as suitable for the youthful reader. Books like Komroff's *Coronet* have long found a friendly niche on the grown-up's bookshelves, and the reading of these brings to the young person the added joy of sharing an interest on the parent's own level. Biography, too, especially when presented in the rapid, modern style finds many readers among young people. From their reading about the great and the near-great they may acquire a knowledge not only of personalities but of human motives and problems. Such biography as Strachey's *Eminent Victorians,* Maurois' *Disraeli,* Guedalla's *The Second Empire* and Woodward's *Meet General Grant* will appeal to the maturing interests of later adolescence.

When we come to the question of the modern realistic novel, we find an arresting challenge and an uncertainty. Many parents are reluctant to open up questions of the mores and manners, the ethics and the morals of today. Yet the art of the written word offers to youth one of the best channels through which to find himself in the present chaos of conflicting ideas and ideals. To read *The Road Back* does not mean that one must

accept the philosophy of Remarque, but such reading will certainly stimulate to new concepts and new evaluations. Novels like Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* open up opportunities to discuss with growing boys and girls questions of life and relationships which have not yet become acute and personal —questions which it would otherwise be difficult to bring into open discussion.

Because we have so routinized our children's lives, so "protected" them from the necessity of making decisions, our adolescents are plunged within a short span of years into responsibilities for which they have not been prepared by training or experience. In the modern realistic novel they may find at least a revealing presentation of ways of living from which they themselves have been guarded.

This is not to say that we shall urge a wholesale reading of *all* the modern novels that come streaming off the presses, many with flippancies and morbidities. We have to recognize that some of the books our children read will remain with them, but many will be of passing interest only. We cannot, in a true sense, select the reading of our growing boys and girls; but we can, by wise and not too insistent guidance, focus their interest upon those worth while books which make for growth.

With these problems in mind parents may welcome a most helpful bulletin issued by the New York Public Library (58th Street Branch) to serve the transition of the boy and girl from the Children's Room to the Adult Reading Room. Miss Mabel Williams, Chairman of the Book Committee for Young People, has been in charge of this study and has compiled a booklist which should be a valuable contribution in this field. She has included particularly those books which boys and girls have enjoyed without the compulsion of school guidance. Besides the usual categories Miss Williams' list includes poetry and drama; and her titles on sports, as well as detective stories, school and college stories recognize the trends and interests of youth today and meet these interests with the best available reading material.

MRS. HUGH GRANT STRAUS.

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Reciprocity in Reading

Ojemann and Stoddard

(*Continued from page* 193)

critical, but not malicious. It is not difficult for the average parent education group or parent leader to distinguish between these two types of reviews. Reviews of the second type, especially when four or five are available for the same book in different journals, may be most helpful.

The general organization of the book should be considered.—It may be systematic with respect to child psychology, for example, but not particularly useful as a practical guide to parents' problems. On the other hand, many books which are most helpful for quick reading on the part of parents do not offer very much to a complete system of child development. Many of the books which are educational in intent fall in between these two zones. They attempt to base their principles and recommendations on sound findings and theories in child development, but go beyond them in recommending ways of providing educational experiences. In other words, child education is not only a science and a technology, but something of an art.

It is well to examine the physical appearance of the book.—It should be attractive. There should be some systematic order discernible. Vocabulary, sentence structure and paragraphing should make for clearness. Excellent materials are sometimes much reduced in effectiveness for parent reading because of lack of attention to these matters.

The reader should be watchful of illustrative case histories.—Some authors make their points by introducing examples of child behavior essentially pathological. One, for example, writes about a mother who refused to eat because her child disobeyed her; another, about a parent who kept her child in a closet for several days. These are interesting to the worker in abnormal psychology, but even when true, they are usually beside the point for the average parent. These extremes startle readers at first, and intrigue their attention, but experience shows that the more common problems are of sufficient interest, when well described and analyzed, to hold the attention of most readers.

The relativity of fact or experience in child development to the age of the child must be kept in mind.—The reader should be critical about the terms "childhood," "early childhood," "baby," "infant," "young child" and "youth" when no clews are given as to exact age range.

However, a paradox in this connection should be

pointed out. Some authors allocate to the specific age range, let us say adolescence, child behavior which is not at all confined to that age range or which may not even be typical of it. An unsuspecting reader entering such a book without a good background is likely to think that the things he reads are now true for the first time in the life of the child. Thus, books on adolescence will emphasize the need for sex instruction—as if there had been no need prior to this period! Or they will discuss a great spurt in physical growth, implying that it is a unique thing in the life of the child. As a matter of fact, we know that it does not compare in size with the spurt during the first year of life. Similarly the idea of adolescence as a time for gaining self-reliance and enlarging the mental horizon carries with it the implication that heretofore such phenomena have not been important. We know that quite the reverse is true.

In all fairness to authors, it should be pointed out that they generally try to present matters as they really feel them to be. Even many of the earlier writers who poured out such a deal of sentimentalism on child behavior were motivated by good intentions. They were rushing to fill a tremendous gap in knowledge which scientists and school people had long neglected. They at least attracted attention to this great sector of human endeavor. They were comparable to the romanticists who first wrote on the wonders of nature. These have been followed by careful scientific workers (not necessarily without imagination).

Similarly in the field of child study and parent education we may expect newer works, carefully validated and edited. Let us hope that this does not mean that they should become dry tabulations, of small encouragement to scientists and of no interest to parents.

Books Across the Sea

We wish to correct a misstatement made in connection with a news note in the November 1931 issue. The Liaison Committee of Major International Associations of which the International Federation of Home and School is a member was referred to as "The Liaison Committee of the International Federation of Home and School." The Liaison Committee is a cooperative organization of which many international associations are members including the Carnegie Foundation on International Peace, International University Federation for the League of Nations, and the World Association for Adult Education.

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The Editors' Page

AN old saying denies to man the opportunity of being a hero to his valet. Most of us have no valets, but all parents have children who may not minister to their personal needs but at least fill the role of scrutineers of their true selves. It is pathetic to contemplate how many parents are oblivious to this phenomenon. We have become so accustomed to relying upon the tradition that children should respect and obey their parents that we overlook a fundamental factor in human development. Children are not born with this traditional attitude and their acceptance or rejection of the role depends entirely upon the circumstances of their upbringing.

SUPPOSE that there were no ties of emotional nature to bolster up the attachment between parent and child; the relationship would then depend on the interaction of two human beings one upon the other. From the child's point of view there would be no background, no rules, no guiding post except the behavior of the parent. This is nearer to the actual point of view of childhood than most parents like to admit. Everything is new. His aim is a cold-blooded attempt to size up and interpret and predict the behavior of the parent in the light of his own interests. Altruism comes later, if at all. He is not looking for favors, for sentiment, for affection, but for consistency because that makes it easier to regulate his own behavior.

THIS concept of consistency is, strangely enough, most frequently neglected and yet it is the only trait in a parent that commands respect throughout the whole life of the infant, child, adolescent, adult. All other forms of behavior either lose their potency or change their influence as the child develops.

C. M. Hincks.

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WHAT CHILDREN THINK OF PARENTS

THE EDITORS' PAGE . . . . . *C. M. Hincks* 217

SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE . . *Beatrice M. Hinkle* 219

HOW PARENTS LOOK TO THE LITTLE CHILD *Lois Hayden Meek* 222

THE CHILD'S NEED OF PARENTAL PATTERNS *Ernest R. Groves* 224

COMRADESHIP AS CHILDREN SEE IT . *Selma M. Mathews* 226

ADOLESCENT "DISCONTENTS" . . *Violet A. Jersawit* 228

OTHER TIMES—OTHER MANNERS 229

PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN SAMOA . . *Margaret Mead* 231

OBEDIENCE? RUSSIAN CHILDREN SAY NO *Nucia P. Lodge* 232

STUDY GROUP DEPARTMENT 235

BOOK REVIEWS 238

IN THE MAGAZINES 240

NEWS AND NOTES 241

SOME RECENT BOOKS ABOUT NATURE 242

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